



Staff Report

May 24, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Town Council

FROM: Robert King, Town Planner
Brit Snipes, Town Engineer
Sean Rabé, Town Manager

DATE: May 24, 2018

RE: Study Session on Village at Loomis Project and Planning Commission's Recommended Denial of the Project

RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this Study Session is to receive information on the proposed Village at Loomis project, to discuss the Planning Commission's recommendation of denial of the project, and to provide feedback and direction to Town Staff and/or the applicant. Because this is a study session, no action should occur and none is sought.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

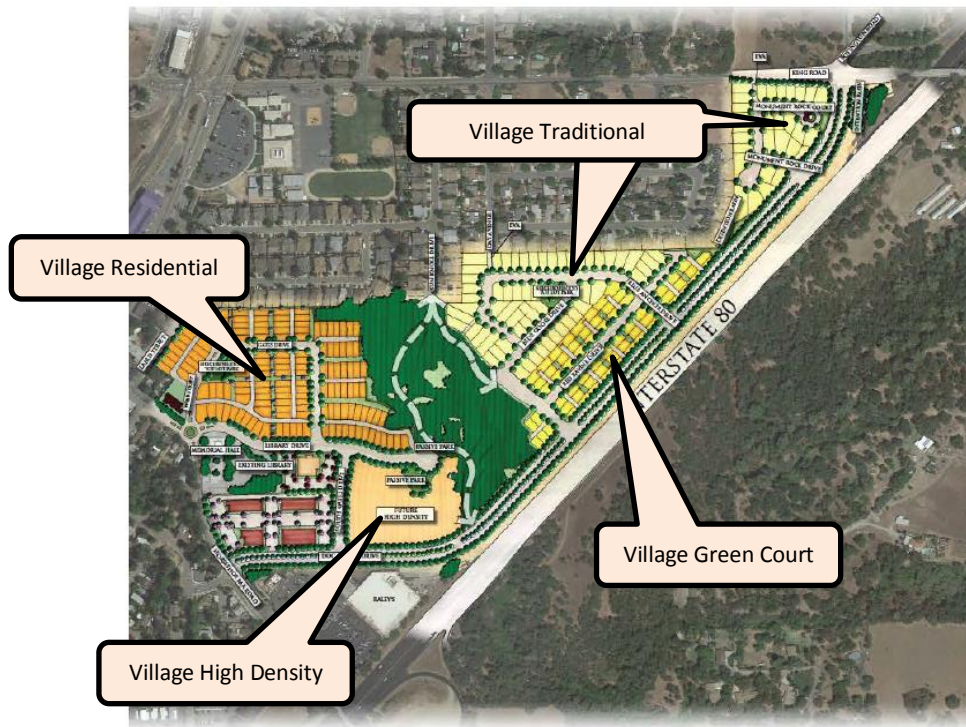
The first public hearing of the Villages at Loomis (Project #14-05) was on September 12, 2017, at a joint workshop of the Town Council and Planning Commission. There have been eleven subsequent public hearings conducted by the Planning Commission. The Commission, at the last of these hearings on April 25, 2018, adopted a resolution recommending that the Town Council deny the project, which decision the applicant appealed.

Because the project seeks legislative approvals such as a general plan amendment and planned development zoning, the Commission was the recommending body, but the Town Council must ultimately approve or disapprove the project. While the Commission has the authority to make final decisions on tentative maps (which this project includes), the Council will also make the decision on the map since this project is presented in a package.

BACKGROUND

The 66.5-acre project as first discussed at the Joint Council/Commission Workshop on September 12, 2017, proposed 418 residential dwelling units (du's) on 48.3 acres, 6.2 acres of commercial, and 12 acres of open space. (*See following map.*)

VILLAGES AT LOOMIS (Original Proposal 2017)



During the Planning Commission hearings held in 2017, much concern was expressed by the public and the Planning Commission as to the project's proposed development standards, especially regarding the Village Residential and Village Green Court housing, which was seen as incompatible to the "small town and rural" nature of the community. The proposed homes in these sections would have minimal private outdoor space with garages facing upon alleys to the rear, with shared commons in front or between the fronts of homes.

The Village Traditional, with its larger setbacks, typical garages, and off-street driveways, did not receive criticism. Concern was expressed about the two-story "Pop-Up" dwellings, and the rear yard setbacks facing David Avenue. There were comments on the Village High Density (apartment complexes), but staff's perspective is that that portion of the project is consistent with the General Plan as a seven acre of high density zoning overlay was approved for this area when the Housing Element was approved in 2014.

Based on comments received, the applicant presented project revisions that reduced the total number of dwelling units from 418 du's to 416 du's, by decreasing the Village Residential section of the project by eight dwellings, while adding six du's to the Village Commercial Mixed Use due to its increase to .35 acres. The revision also eliminated 1.5 acres of Village Office Commercial by replacing it with a "Civic Park." Additional off-street parking was incorporated into the design of the project to satisfy the project's parking requirements. These changes were described in the applicant's January 16, 2018 submittal titled "Proposed Project Modifications." These changes were memorialized in the Revised Preliminary Development Plan and Revised Specific Development Plan, which were submitted to the Commission at its February 27, 2018 meeting. See the following table for a summary of the revisions,

with the changes shown in red font. A diagram of the Village Residential portion of the revised project follows as well.

Proposed Land Use	ACRES		DWELLINGS	
	2017 Proposal	2018 Revision	2017 Proposal	2018 Revision
Village Residential	14.9	14.55	143	135
Village Green Court	9.6	9.6	64	64
Village Traditional	16.8	16.8	87	87
Village High Density	4.6	4.6	117	117
Total Residential	45.9	45.55	411	403
Village Mixed Use	0.4	0.75	7	13
Village Office	1.3	0		
Village Commercial	4.9	4.9		
Total Commercial	6.6	5.65	7	13
Open Space	9.68	9.68		
Active Parks	3.07	4.37		
Passive Parks	1.25	1.25		
	0	0		
Total Public Spaces	14	15.30		
Totals	66.5	66.5	418	416

The revision also eliminated some of the dead-end alleys, by reorienting the alleys along the eastern side of the Village Residential, to run north-south rather than east-west. The following graphic shows this revision, along with the additional Village Mixed Use, and replacing the Village Office with a civic park. The applicant requested that the Planning Commission approve the project, as revised.

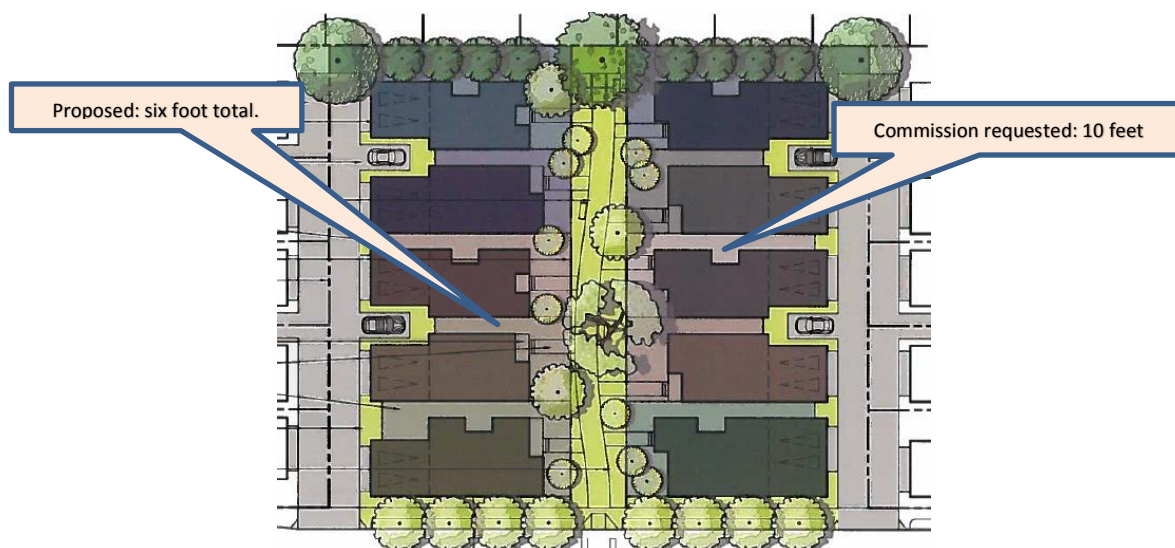


At its March 14, 2018 special meeting, the Commission discussed the proposed minimum lot sizes of 2,250 sf. in the Village Residential and 2,350 sf. in the Village Green Court areas. A consensus of the Commission indicated the lot sizes were too small. Currently, the minimum lot size for residential uses is 3,500 sf (in the RM-3.5 zone) when designated Medium/High Residential in the General Plan. The Commission directed staff to prepare a condition of approval for future consideration to require a

minimum lot size of 3,000 sf in the Village Residential and the Village Garden Court areas. The Commission left the Village Traditional minimum lot size of 4,000 sf. unchanged.

Another concern of the Commission was the setbacks throughout the project. The Commission was concerned about the three-foot side yard setbacks in the Village Residential and the Village Green Court portions of the project. According to the applicants, these would be open without fences to provide a six-foot-wide area between each dwelling, with a Use Easement to allow “the owner of a lot to use the side yard of the neighboring lot as if it were her/his property. The neighboring owner who granted the easement retains the right to access the easement area to maintain her/his property.”

The following diagram shows how the side yards would be designed:



The Planning Commission expressed concern as to how this would actually work out in practice, as a six-foot-wide area was considered to be unusable. As a result, the Commission directed staff to prepare a condition of approval for consideration that required five-foot side yard setbacks throughout the Project, which would create a minimum width of 10 foot between the dwellings. The front and rear yard setbacks in these areas remained unchanged by the Commission.

To address the concerns of residents along the south side of David Avenue, Silver Ranch Avenue and Sun Knoll Drive who would be adjacent to the Village Traditional lots north of Blue Anchor Drive, the Planning Commission’s consensus was to limit dwellings that backed up to the existing homes along those streets to no more than one-story, which would disallow the “pop-up” style of housing requested by the applicant. The Commission also requested a minimum rear yard setback of 20 feet for the homes that backed up to David Avenue, Silver Ranch Avenue and Sun Knoll Drive, and a minimum rear yard setback of 15 feet for homes in the Village Traditional section that did not back up to existing homes. The Commission also requested modifications to the front setbacks of these homes, with 18-foot setbacks to the garage and 10-foot setbacks to the living area. As with the Village Residential and Village Green Court, the Planning Commission requested five-foot side yard setbacks throughout the Village Traditional Area.

Following the March 27, 2018 Planning Commission hearing in which the Commission requested modifications to the project for its consideration, the Town received a letter from the applicant dated Thursday April 5, 2018 (attached) responding to the request. The applicant explained the project would not be financially viable if they made the changes as to lot size and setbacks. These changes would result in the loss of approximately 35 residential lots, “resulting in significant revenue loss of approximately \$3.5 million.” The applicant concluded with a request, “that all information necessary to support a decision by the Planning Commission be submitted to them and available to the public such that a recommendation of support by the Planning Commission can be achieved at their next regular meeting on April 25, 2018.”

On April 25, 2018 after closing the public hearing, the Planning Commission found the general plan amendments of the Village at Loomis project inconsistent with the goals, policies and objectives of the Loomis General Plan, as it did not provide sufficient commercial land necessary for the future economic development of the town, and the proposed single family residential designations would result in insufficient lot sizes, substandard setbacks, minimal private outdoor space, with housing design and density not compatible for the area or adjacent neighborhoods and found that the project suffered from:

1. Insufficient minimum lot sizes;
2. Too small of setbacks;
3. Aesthetic defects from situating two-story homes along David Avenue;
4. Inadequate active park space;
5. Inadequate general commercial zoning.

CEQA

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the project, analyzing the impacts of the project on the environment. The EIR was circulated for public comment for a 45-day comment period, as required by CEQA. The Town Council would be required to consider the EIR should the Villages Project be considered for approval at a future meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Revised Village Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) (submitted February 27, 2018)
- B. Revised Village Specific Development Plan (SDP) for PD Areas 1, 2, and 3 (submitted to Commission on February 27, 2018)
- C. Applicant’s Letter dated April 5, 2018
- D. Planning Commission Staff Report dated April 25, 2018
- E. Planning Commission Resolution Recommending Denial dated April 25, 2018
- F. Applicant's Appeal of Planning Commission Decision dated May 4, 2018
- G. Revised Village Tentative Subdivision Map (Sheets 1-10) dated March 6, 2018

Previous Attachments

1. The Village at Loomis FEIR (distributed at the September 12, 2017 Joint Council/Commission Workshop; copies are available either on the Town’s Website or at Town Hall during regular business hours)